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Historic Sketches of London Ontario

PUBLISHED BY

THE LONDON AND MIDDLESEX
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1908

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1909
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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

Programs of The London and Middlesex Historical Society



TRANSACTIONS 1902-1907

PIONEERS OF MIDDLESEX

SIR JOHN CARLING

FOUNDING OF LONDON

CL. T. CAMPBELL, M.D.

1908

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

F5019

1909

1847

The London and Middlesex Historical Society

This Society was organized on the 22nd of October, 1901, in accordance with arrangements made at a preliminary meeting held at the Western University, London, on the 26th of June previous. Eight regular monthly meetings have been held every year since—the Society taking a recess during the summer. At every meeting historical papers and objects of historical interest have been presented; and the Society has gathered the nucleus of a historical museum.

The following are among the papers of original research that have been presented: "The U. E. Loyalists," by Sir John Bourinot; "Early Explorations in Western Ontario," by Mr. J. H. Coyne; "The Founding of London," Dr. Cl. T. Campbell; "The 100th (Canadian) Regiment," Major Gorman; "The Battle of Longwoods," Mr. I. H. Poole; "Municipal Progress," Mr. G. R. Patullo; "Early Anglican Missions," Archdeacon Richardson; "The Making of Ontario," Mr. C. C. James; "The Talbot Settlement," Judge Hughes; "The Settlement of Hyde Park," "The Stevens Family," and "The Pioneer Militia," Mr. A. McQueen; "Aboriginal Characteristics," Mr. David Boyle; "The Names of London Streets," Miss Priddis; "The Extermination of the Neutrals," Mr. John Dearness; "Indian Tribes and Relics," Dr. Woolverton; "The First Bishop of Huron," Mr. V. Cronyn.

Papers of personal recollections of pioneer days in the county have been given by Sir John Carling, Judge Wm. Elliott, Judge Hughes, Hon. Freeman Talbot, Messrs. W. J. Imlach, Thos. Kent, Wm. Percival, Elliot Grieves, A. Sydere, J. Eckert, Mesdames Porte, Root, and many others; and very many papers on literary subjects of historical interest by a number of ladies and gentlemen.

In order to encourage school children in the study of local history, the society has offered prizes for the best essays on Township Histories, and lives of Pioneers. The following prizes for essays have been awarded:

"The Township of Biddulph," by W. W. Rivington.

"John Blair," by Alex. Blair Gray.

"Francis Nichol," by Mabel Nichol.

"Adam Telfer" by Reta Telfer.

Tablets have been erected at points of interest in the city—the site of the first house, and on the Russian Guns captured in the Crimean War.

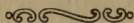
The annual meeting of the Society is held on the 3rd of March—being the date of Governor Simcoe's visit to London.

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First Officers of the Society

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PRESIDENT—CL. T. CAMPBELL, M. D.
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Hastings, T. W.
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*Macbeth, Jno.
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Macklin, Henry
Macklin, Miss Stella
MacRobert, E. J.
Magee, Mr. Justice
Magee, Mrs.
Marshall, Mrs. J. H.

Members of the Society

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Mills, Miss | Scarrow, W. |
| Mills, Miss Martha | Screaton, A. |
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| Riggs, Jno. | Wyatt, W. |
| Robinson, Alf. | Yates, Miss |
| Roome, W. F., M. D. | Zimmerman, Miss F. |
| Rowe, Thos. | |
| Saunders, W. E. | |

* *Deceased*

Transactions of The London and Middlesex Historical Society

1901

JUNE 26.—Preliminary meeting at Western University, and Committee on Organization formed.

OCT. 22.—Meeting in Collegiate Institute, and address by Miss Fitzgibbon, of Toronto, on the Study of Canadian History. Adoption of constitution. Officers elected:—Honorary President, Sir John Carling; President, Dr. Cl. T. Campbell; First Vice-Pres., Jas. Egan; Second Vice-Pres., Mrs. E. N. English; Cor.-Secretary, Dr. W. M. English; Recording-Secretary, Mrs. Gahan; Treasurer, Henry Macklin; Directors, Rev. J. G. Stuart, Dr. Woolverton, Messrs. John Cameron, E. B. Edwards, John Dearness, and Miss Priddis.

NOV. 19.—In the Public Library. President's address on "The Study of History;" paper on "Pioneer Life," by Mr. W. J. Imlach; "Pioneers of Middlesex," by Sir John Carling.

DEC. 17.—"Exhibition of Canadian Relics," by Dr. Woolverton; "Reminiscences of Sixty-Four Years in London," by Judge Wm. Elliott.

1902

JAN. 16.—In the City Hall. Address, "The U. E. Loyalists," by Sir John Bourinot.

FEB. 18.—"Early explorations in Western Ontario," by Mr. J. H. Coyne, of St. Thomas.

MARCH 4.—Annual meeting. Reports received. Application made for affiliation with the Ontario Society. Old officers re-elected, with the following:—Assistant Sec., Miss Florence Mitchell; Curator, Dr. Woolverton; Directors, Col. John Macbeth, Messrs. J. Cameron, J. Dearness, C. B. Edwards, J. G. Stuart, and Miss Priddis.

MARCH 18—"London in the Forties," by Judge Hughes, of St. Thomas.

APRIL 16—"The First Bishop of Huron," by Mr. V. Cronyn.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE SOCIETY

- MAY 20.—“Reminiscences,” of Mrs. Gilbert Porte; “The 100th (Canadian) Regiment,” by Major Gorman, Sarnia.
- OCT. 14.—“The Founding of London,” by the President.
- NOV. 18.—“Pioneers of Middlesex,” by Hon. Freeman Talbot, of Stratcarol, Assa.
- DEC. 16.—“Reminiscences,” by Mr. Thos. Kent; “The Wreck at the battle of Moraviantown,” by Dr. Woolverton.

1903

- JAN. 18.—“Recollections of Mrs. Root,” read by Rev. J. G. Stuart; “Robert Fleming Gourlay,” by Dr. Campbell.
- FEB. 17.—“Early explorations in Southwestern Ontario,” Mr. J. H. Coyne, St. Thomas, (second paper).
- MARCH 17.—Annual meeting. “The Indians of the United States,” Dr. Woolverton. Reports presented. Officers elected:—Hon. Pres., Sir John Carling; Pres., Dr. Campbell; 1st Vice-Pres., Mr. Jas. Egan; 2nd Vice-Pres., Miss Priddis; Sec., Mrs. Gahan; Asst. Sec., Miss Mitchell; Cor.-Sec., Dr. English; Curator, Dr. Woolverton; Treas., Mr. H. Macklin; Directors, Rev. J. G. Stuart, Messrs. Talbot Macbeth, F. Leonard, John Dearness, C. B. Edwards, and Mesdames, Fraser, Macbeth and Dearness.
- APRIL 21.—“The Poetry of Dr. W. H. Drummond,” by Prof. Tambllyn, Western University.
- MAY 17.—“The Battle of the Longwoods,” by Mr. J. I. Poole, of Comber.
- OCT. 20.—“Municipal Progress,” by Mr. G. R. Patullo, of Woodstock.
- NOV. 17.—“The Verse Writers of the County—Robert Elliott,” by Mr. John Dearness.
- DEC. 15.—“Recollections,” by Mr. Arthur Sydere, of Toronto.

1904

- JAN. 19.—“Early Anglican Missions in Canada,” by Archdeacon Richardson.
- FEB. 16.—“The Making of Ontario,” by Mr. C. C. James, Toronto.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE SOCIETY

- MARCH 15.—Annual meeting. Officers elected: President, John Dearness; 1st Vice-Pres., Dr. English; 2nd Vice-Pres., Miss Priddis; Curator, Dr. Woolverton; Rec.-Sec., Mrs. Gahan; Asst.-Sec., Miss Mitchell; Cor.-Sec., F. Lawson; Treas., H. Macklin; Directors, Messrs. Pearce, Leonard, Talbot Macbeth, Edwards, A. Stewart, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Roome, Rev. J. G. Stuart, and Mesdames Fraser, Dearness and Cannell.
- APRIL 19.—“The Talbot Settlement,” by Judge Hughes, of St. Thomas. “The pioneers of Lobo,” by D. J. Campbell.
- MAY 17.—“The settlement of Hyde Park,” and “The Mackenzie Family,” read by Mrs. Gahan; “Laura Secord,” by Mr. Frank Lawson.
- OCT. 18.—“The Stevens Family,” by Mr. A. McQueen; “Relation of the Bureau of Archives to Historical Societies,” by Mr. J. Fraser, Provincial Archivist.
- NOV. 15.—“The British Flag,” by Miss Priddis; William Percival’s Recollections,” read by Miss Burgess.
- DEC. 20.—“Our Militia,” by Mr. A. McQueen.

1905

- JAN. 17.—“The Pioneers of North Middlesex,” by Mr. W. Matheson, of Lucan.
- FEB. 21.—“Aboriginal Characteristics and Civilized Parallels,” by Mr. David Boyle, of Toronto.
- MARCH 21.—“The Boundaries of Canada,” by Mr. McVicar, of London; “Our Militia,” by Mr. A. McQueen (second paper.)
- APRIL 18.—Annual meeting. “The township of Biddulph,” by Mr. W. W. Revington, of Mooresville. Societies’ prizes awarded, and papers read: 1st, “Township of Biddulph,” by W. W. Revington; 2nd, “John Blair,” by Alex. Blair Gray, of Komoka; 3rd, “Francis Nichol,” by Mabel Nichol; 4th, “Adam Telfer,” by Rita Telfer. Officers elected: The same as last year, except Directors, who are Dr. Campbell, Mr. McVicar, Dr. Tambllyn, Mrs. Fraser.
- MAY 16th.—“Origin of the Names of London Streets,” by Miss Priddis.
- OCT. 10.—“Australia,” by Mr. J. S. Larke, Government Commissioner.
- OCT. 17.—“The Union Jack, and the Canadian Coat of Arms,” by Mr. Casselman, of Toronto.
- NOV. 21.—“Canadian Autonomy,” by Mr. Alex. Stuart.
- DEC. 19.—“Scenes in Europe,” by Mr. Frank Lawson, and Mr. A. W. Fraser.

1906

FEB. 19.—"Cobalt and New Ontario," by Mr. M. Parkinson, of Toronto.

MARCH 20.—Annual meeting. Officers elected: President, Frank Lawson; 1st Vice Pres., F. Leonard; 2nd Vice Pres., Mrs. A. W. Fraser; Curator, Dr. Woolverton; Rec. Sec., Miss Mitchell; Cor. Sec., C. B. Edwards; Treas., H. Macklin; Directors, Dr. English, Dr. Campbell, Messrs. Pearce, Vining, Dearness, Fraser, and Mesdames, Brickenden, Gahan, Priddis and Cannell.

APRIL 17—"Indian Relics," by Dr. Woolverton.

MAY 17.—"The Canadian Rockies," by Mr. F. E. Leonard.

OCT. 16.—"The Extermination of the Neutrals," by Mr. J. Dearness. Tablets ordered to be placed on first house in London.

NOV. 20.—Miscellaneous papers by different members.

DEC.—"David Glass, ex-Mayor of London," by Mr. Frank Glass.

1907

JAN. 28.—"England in the Last Century," by Rev. J. Spence.

FEB. 19.—"The Indian Mutiny," by Mr. Saint Sing.

MARCH 26.—"Senator Elijah Leonard," by Mr. Cottam.

APRIL 23.—Annual meeting. Tablets ordered on guns in Victoria Park. Officers elected: President, Frank Lawson; 1st Vice Pres., F. E. Leonard; 2nd Vice-Pres., Mrs. A. W. Fraser; Sec., Miss Mitchell; Asst. Sec., Douglas Wright; Cor. Sec., C. B. Edwards; Treas., H. Macklin; Curator, Dr. Woolverton; Directors, Dr. Campbell, Dr. English, Mr. J. Pearce, Mr. J. Dearness, Mr. A. W. Fraser, Miss Cannell, Miss Price, Mrs. Brickenden, Mrs. Gahan.

MAY 17.—"The Pioneers of Pond Mill," by Mr. Elliott Grieve.

NOV. 19.—"An evening with Ruskin," by Miss A. Bartram and Mr. Frank Lawson.

DEC. 17—"Rudyard Kipling," by Mr. Irwin.

1908

JAN. 21—"Career and trial of Townsend," by Dr. Woolverton.

FEB. 18—"Three days on the Niagara frontier," by Mr. James Sheppard, of Queenston.

MAR. 17—"Reminiscences of Early School days of London East," by Mr. W. D. Eckert.

APRIL 28—Annual meeting. "History of the Baconian Club," by Mr. C. C. Jarvis. Annual reports read. Officers elected: Pres., Henry Macklin; 1st Vice Pres., A. W. Fraser; 2nd Vice Pres., Mrs. Brickenden; Curator, Dr. Woolverton; Cor. Sec., C. B. Edwards; Rec. Sec., Florence A. Mitchell; Treas., Mr. Dearness; Auditors, J. S. Pearce and A. W. Fraser. Executive Committee, Miss Macklin, Dr. Campbell, Miss Priddis, Mrs. Gahan, Miss Cannell and Frank Lawson.

The Founding of London

READ BEFORE THE LONDON AND MIDDLESEX HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY CL. T. CAMPBELL, M.D., OCTOBER THE 24TH, 1902

The earliest inhabitants of Western Ontario of whom history gives any record were aborigines known to us as the Huron-Iroquois. Their ancestral race originated in a hole in the north bank of the River St. Lawrence. At least, their traditions have so stated, and that is about as definite and satisfactory as many traditions of other races which are popularly accepted as historical facts. But it seems certain that at an early period a race existed in that locality which, owing to dissensions, separated into two divisions before the arrival of the first white men, which were to become known as the Hurons and the Iroquois. The former migrated to the region north and west of Toronto; the latter to what is now New York State. Another branch, the Attiandaras (or Neutrals as they were termed by the French), occupied the southern part of the Western peninsula from Niagara to Goderich.

The Indians of the Huron-Iroquois race were of a superior type. They were an intellectual people, fluent in speech, wise in counsel, daring in battle. Had they been hemmed in by geographical limits they might easily have developed a civilization equal, if not superior, to that of the Aztecs of Mexico. But with a wide expanse of country over which they were free to roam, they kept to the primeval state of hunters and warriors, and advanced no further than had the inhabitants of Europe in the Stone Age.

The old dissensions which had divided the original race into the Hurons and Iroquois continued in a struggle which was to have no end until the one had practically exterminated the other. For a long time the Attiandaras of our locality succeeded in maintaining a position of neutrality. The early French explorers estimated them at about 12,000 people, settled in some 36 fortified villages, many of which became the sites of early mission enterprise. All through this section of country, in Middlesex, Perth, Oxford, Elgin and Kent, traces have been found of these villages. Probably the nearest to the site of London was located on lot 20, con. 4, of London township, on the property of one of the members of this society, Mr. Shaw-Wood. The remains show an ideal fortified village,

romantically situated on a high plateau overlooking the Medway and one of its tributaries, and enclosing between earthworks a space of three or four acres. About the middle of the 17th century, however, the conquering Iroquois swept over this country, defeated the Neutrals, destroyed their villages and turned the land into a hunting ground for beaver.

The first white men who occupied Western Ontario were the French priests. When Champlain came to Canada on his seventh voyage, he brought with him four Recollet missionaries. One of number, Father Le Caron, at once started up the Ottawa River, and across to Lake Nipissing and the Georgian Bay and Champlain, following in a few months, found him attempting to preach through an interpreter, at a village not far removed from where the town of Orillia now stands.

Later missionary enterprises followed on a more extensive scale, principally in charge of the Jesuits. The first members of this Order came to Canada in 1623, but it was in 1640 that Fathers Brebeuf and Chaumont established the first missions in our section. Reading their records in the "Jesuits' Relations," it is difficult to locate precisely the different villages in which they set up the altar of their worship. They did not trouble themselves about questions of latitude and longitude, and we can only trace their travels and their stopping places in the interior of the country by circumstantial evidence. As nearly as we can estimate the nearest missions to London prior to 1650 were Notre Dame des Anges, near Brantford; St. Joseph's, somewhere in Kent county; St. Michael's, north-east of Sarnia, and St. Alexis', some distance south of London. Mr. Coyne, the president of the Ontario Historical Society, thinks he has definitely located the latter at the site of some village ruins in the township of Southwold. In their labors of love, these pioneer missionaries deemed no sacrifice too great; they lived in poverty and discomfort; they often suffered cruel tortures; and many died the martyr's death—each one counting himself happy if in his life he was able to uphold the Cross and convert a single soul before he died.

Meanwhile the voyageur and explorer were not idle. La Salle, Joliet, Nicollet, Hennepin, Marquette, and others—some priests and some laymen—were wandering westward and mapping out the land. At first the line of travel was up the Ottawa, and across to Lake Huron and Lake Superior. But in 1669 La Salle joined with two Sulpicians—Dollier de Casson and De Gallinee—in an expedition up the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario. Reaching Burlington Bay they took an overland route, until at the Ouse, or Grand River, they met Joliet, who had come down from Lake Superior. Here La Salle was taken ill and had to return. But Dollier went down the Grand River to Lake Erie, wintered at Long Point,

THE FOUNDING OF LONDON

then skirted the lake in springtime till he reached Detroit, and from thence to Sault Ste. Marie. He took formal possession of this western peninsula in the name of France, and a rude map of the new territory, prepared by De Gallinee, was sent to the King.

Ten years later La Salle built a small vessel (La Griffon) at the mouth of the Cayuga creek, ten miles north of Buffalo, in which he sailed to Detroit and thence over to Lake Michigan. Returning laden with furs, La Griffon went down in a storm on the lake, and thus finished the brief career of the first ship which sailed the waters of Lake Erie.

The people of the English colonies were slow in following the French pioneers into the western lakes. Their first attempt was in 1686, when Major Patrick McGregor, with a party of thirty men, left Albany on a trading expedition. He went by way of Lake Erie, but meeting a superior force of French and Indians under Tonty, was taken prisoner. And this first English voyage to the lakes was also the last until after the conquest.

Meanwhile the Western Peninsula was traversed by trappers and traders, though no permanent settlement was made until Cadillac built a fort at Detroit, in 1701, almost in the centre of the present city, and Joncaire fortified Niagara in 1721. Temporary settlements had been made at both of these places as early as 1687. The general route of travel across the peninsula seems to have been by an Indian trail, which, beginning at Burlington Bay, branched off to Lake Erie by the Grand River, and to Lake St. Clair by the valley of the Thames. The only people who travelled along the banks of our river in those days, and whose feet may have crossed the site of our city, were the trappers collecting furs, and the Indians who varied their hunting expeditions by occasionally going on the war-path and collecting the scalps of their enemies instead of the skins of the beaver.

At this time the geography of the Western peninsula was but little known. The first map was that of Gallinee (1670). I cannot show it to you, but it only gave a rude outline of the coast, while inland was a *terra incognita*. I believe Farquharson's map (1684) indicates a river where the Thames might be. The earliest I can show you is that of Thomas Jeffrey, geographer to the King, published in 1672, which gives a tracing of a river without a name. Peter Bell's map, ten years later, calls the Thames the New River. But in all these early maps the size and course of the river was put down by guess work and no branches are shown. The report accompanying Bellini's map (1744), states that the river was known to the Indians as the Askenessippi, or antlered river. But as early as 1745 the trappers had dubbed it La Tranche (the cut, or trench). Who gave it the name of New River I do not know, but it was a

name seldom used, and before the first house was built in London its present name had been definitely settled upon by Gov. Simcoe.

But a new era was about to dawn. On the 13th September, 1759, the British flag was unfurled on the Plains of Abraham, and the rule of France in Canada came to an end. Then followed the rebellion of the old English colonies, and the establishment of the United States, with the consequent emmigration of a large number of loyal citizens who were compelled to seek a new home under the old flag. In our peninsula they formed a number of little settlements in the Niagara district, along the shores of Lake Erie, and opposite Detroit, which gradually spread inward over the trail of the Indian hunter.

The British Government, ever careful of the rights of the aborigines, made treaties with them for the purpose of securing a legitimate title to the lands for the new settlers. Under one of these, dated May 22nd, 1784, the western peninsula was purchased by Great Britain, though some sections were subsequently vested in the Indians themselves, as in the case of the settlements on the Grand River and the Thames.

The earliest pioneers in our own vicinity located at Delaware. James R. Brown, of Edinburgh, who published his "Views of Canada and the Colonists." in 1844, and who received his information from some of the pioneers, tells how, shortly after the landing of the U. E. Loyalists in the Niagara district, a party of them left Ancaster for the West, with tobacco, whiskey, calico, knives and trinkets for the Indian trade. Striking La Tranche, about the present site of Woodstock, they took canoes and followed the river down past the forks and camped near the present village of Delaware, making it the headquarters of their traffic with the Indians. The location pleased them and they sent word back to their friends in Ancaster, some of whom speedily joined them, and the foundation of the first settlement was made.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald, whose romantic history has been written by Thomas Moore, passed over the trail of the Thames valley about this time on his way to Detroit, but he made no stop beyond a rest over night by the camp fire.

The addition of a large number of English speaking people to the population or what used to be French Canada gave rise to grave complications in the management of the colony; and it was deemed advisable by the British Government to divide it into two sections. Upper and Lower Canada, which was done by proclamation of the Governor, Lord Dorchester, on May 26, 1791. At this time the population of the new province of Upper Canada was about 20,000. There were villages at Kingston and Newark, and some small settlements along the shores of the St. Lawrence and the lakes, with scattered families in the interior.

Col. John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, had been an active participant in the war of the colonial rebellion, and had very strong feelings against the new republic of the United States. He expected another war before many years, and his first thoughts on receiving his appointment were in the direction of offensive and defensive measures against our neighbors. Judging from reports and maps which he examined at the Home Office, he was led to believe that La Tranche was a large river, extending well to the north-east, with only a short portage necessary to connect its waters with those of the Ouse, or Grand River. On his way to Upper Canada he made further investigations, and in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Henry Dundas, written from Montreal, on the 7th December, 1791, says: "I am happy to have found in the surveyor's office an accurate survey of the River La Tranche. It answers my most sanguine expectations, and I have but little doubt that its communications with the Ontario and Erie will be found to be very practicable, the whole forming a route which in all respects may annihilate the political consequence of Niagara and Lake Erie. . . My ideas at present are to assemble the new corps, artificers, etc., at Cataragui (Kingston), and to take its present garrison and visit Toronto and the heads of La Tranche, to pass down that river to Detroit, and early in the spring to occupy such a central position as shall be previously chosen for the capital."

He spent the winter at Newark, and in his letter to the Colonial Office, written April 28th, 1792, he says: "Toronto appears to be the natural arsenal of Lake Ontario, and to afford easy access overland to Lake Huron. The River La Tranche, near the navigable head of which I propose to establish the capital, by what I can gather from the few people who have visited it, will afford a safe, more certain, and I am inclined to think, by taking advantage of the season, a less expensive route to Detroit than that of Niagara."

Still later on the 30th August, writing from Newark he announces his intention to establish himself in the spring following on La Tranche, and in a proclamation issued this year he christened our river the Thames.

The Governor did not settle here in the spring as he said he would, but he made a trip from Niagara to Detroit and back, starting on February 4th 1793. It required two months to make the journey, and there were no unnecessary delays on the road. His secretary, Major Littlehales, kept a diary of the trip, which was published some years ago in a pamphlet by Rev. Dr. Scadding, of Toronto. I understand that a portion of the original manuscript is in the possession of Mr. Shanly, of London.

Leaving Newark the Governor proceeded by way of St. Catharines (to use modern names), Hamilton, Brantford and Woodstock,

crossing the Thames, and following a line south of London to Delaware. Here they took to the ice on the river for a few miles, thence through the newly established Moravian settlement to Dolson's, (near Chatham), and from there to Detroit by canoe. Returning he followed the same course back to Delaware, and on Saturday, the 2nd of March, came to the forks of the river. Here I may quote from the record :

"March 2nd. We struck the Thames at one end of a low, flat island, enveloped with shrubs and trees. The rapidity and strength of the current were such as to have forced a channel through the mainland, being a peninsula, and to have formed the island. The Governor wished to examine the situation and its environs, and therefore remained here all day. He judged it to be a situation eminently calculated for the metropolis of all Canada. Among many other essentials, it possesses the following advantages : Command of territory, internal situation, central position, facility of water communication up and down the Thames into Lakes St. Clair, Erie, Huron and Superior, and for small craft to probably near the Moravian settlement ; to the northward by a small portage to the waters flowing into Lake Huron ; to the south-east by a carrying place into Lake Ontario and the River St. Lawrence ; the soil luxuriantly fertile ; the land rich and capable of being easily cleared and soon put into a state of agriculture ; a pinery upon the adjacent high knoll, and other timber on the heights well calculated for the erection of public buildings ; a climate not inferior to any part of Canada. To these natural advantages, an object of great consideration is to be added, that the enormous expense of the Indian Department would be greatly diminished, if not abolished. The Indians would, in all probability, be induced to become the carriers of their own peltries, and they would find a ready, contiguous, commodious and equitable mart, honorably advantageous to the Government and the community generally, without their becoming a prey to the monopolizing and unprincipled trader.

"March 3rd—We were glad to leave our wigwam early this morning, it having rained incessantly the whole night ; besides, the hemlock branches upon which we slept were wet before they were gathered for our use. We first ascended the height, at least 120 feet, into a continuation of the pinery already mentioned, quitting that we came to a beautiful plain, with detached clumps of white oak and open woods, then crossing a thick, swampy wood we were at a loss to discover any track ; but in a few moments we were released from this dilemma by the Indians, who making a cast, soon discovered our old path to Detroit."

Analyzing these records in the diary, we should infer that the Governor, coming from Detroit, south of the Thames, struck the river at what is now called "the Cove." The stream had here made

a sharp curve to the south, then west, then north, near where the curve began, thus forming a peninsula. During a heavy flood its waters had cut across the neck of the peninsula and formed an island. How long that was before the Governor's visit we cannot tell. Spending the night at the Forks, probably where the bowling club grounds are situated, he turned southward, climbing the high bank at the Ridgeway, or Becher street, which seems to have been covered with pines. Going south in order to strike the trail by which he had passed to Detroit the previous month, he found a plain with clumps of white oak, then a swampy wood, and finally came to the site of his former encampment on the 14th of February, which, as we learn from an earlier part of the diary, was at an Indian village, some four miles distant from two little lakes—presumably the ponds well known between the second and third concessions of Westminster. However as the diary does not give the latitude and longitude of the points mentioned on the journey, the direct line of march, or even the exact distances, his route can only be approximately calculated and not definitely fixed.

During the summer of that year the Governor sent Mr. McNiff to make a survey of the forks of the Thames, and on the 30th September, sending the report to Mr. Dundas he wrote: "The tract of country which lies between the river (or rather navigable canal, as its Indian name and French translation import) and Lake Erie is one of the finest for all agricultural purposes in North America, and far exceeds the soil and climate of the Atlantic States. There are few or no interjacent swamps, and a variety of useful streams empty themselves into the lake or river. . . . They lead to the propriety of establishing a capital of Upper Canada which may be somewhat distant from the centre of the colony. . . . The capital I propose to be established at New London."

The London district now began to fill up with settlers. The lands were surveyed, and extensive grants made, especially to officers and soldiers, and loyal immigrants. The Governor was anxious to have the country settled as rapidly as possible, and used every effort to encourage immigration. Among the grants made was one to Eb. Allen, in 1795, of over 2,000 acres, in the neighborhood of Delaware, on condition that he should erect a grist mill. This was commenced in 1797, on Dingman's Creek; but before he finished it Allen had to go to jail for counterfeiting. He seems to have been an energetic person but not an exemplary citizen. A post office was established at Delaware, with Dan. Springer for postmaster. This was, at the time, the only post office between Niagara and Detroit.

The principal settlement was on the shore of Lake Erie around Long Point. And when London district was organized, Turkey Point was made the seat of government, though court was held for

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a year or two at Charlotteville. The settlers erected a log hut to serve for judicial purposes. Court was held in the upper story, which was entered by a rough stairway outside the building. The lower floor served as a jail, but the only way they could keep a prisoner from leaving whenever he saw fit was to put a man on guard with a shotgun. The juries retired to consider their verdict in the seclusion of the shade trees outside. Col. Samuel Ryerse, who had settled at Long Point, was the chairman of the first board of magistrates, or judge in that circuit. Most of the grand jury presentments at this pioneer court were for assault and battery, and petty larceny, and the parties interested were frequently from Delaware, where Eb. Allen and his friends were active in providing business for the judiciary. The stocks, whipping post, and a pecuniary fine were usual forms of punishment. Among the cases on record we find, in 1800, Dan. McCall, jr., six shillings for swearing, the tariff being a shilling an oath. Luther Cooly had to pay £40 for selling liquor without a license. Paul Averill was mulcted in five shillings for Sabbath breaking; Peter Coombs, for larceny got twenty lashes at the whipping post. The court house was shortly after removed to Vittoria, which remained the judicial seat until the building was destroyed by fire in 1825.

The most extensive grant of land in this vicinity was made to Col. Talbot, who located not far from Port Stanley in 1803. He received at first only the 5,000 acres to which an officer was entitled; but this was supplemented by additional grants—Lord Durham's report says he received 48,500 acres. He acted, however, as a Government land agent, and received 50 acres for every 150 granted through him to an actual settler. In fact, there is no way of correctly estimating just how much land he did receive. North of London township, the Canada Company controlled the country; at the western extremity of the peninsula, Col. Baby had a large section, while east of London, Reynolds, Ingersoll and Nelles had extensive grants.

While the surrounding country was being settled, however, the tract of land around the forks of the Thames remained intact. That had been reserved from settlement for Governor Simcoe's capital. But the capital never materialized. That was not Simcoe's fault. Reading Canadian history casually one gets the idea that the Governor changed his mind and selected Toronto. As a matter of fact he remained true to his first choice. An examination of his correspondence with the Home Office shows this very clearly. I have given an extract from his letter to Mr. Dundas in 1793 enclosing McNiff's survey. October 23 of the same year he urges upon the imperial authorities the advisability of at once occupying London in the public interests, and in December he advises that the troops should be removed from Detroit—one-half to be located at Chat-

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ham, which he had selected for his future navy yard, and the rest sent to London.

A letter which he received from Dundas, dated March 16, 1794, shows that the Government approved of his ideas as to the future capital, and he was told the Governor-General, Lord Dorchester, had been instructed to raise two battalions, of 750 men each, and from these he would receive a sufficient detachment to garrison his proposed post on the Thames and his capital city.

In all his correspondence, up to the date of his removal from Canada, Simcoe persistently clung to the idea of founding his capital on the Thames. Even after buildings had been erected at York, or Toronto, for Government purposes he would only consider them as temporary works; and in one letter we find him suggesting that "should the seat of government be transferred to the Thames, the proper place, the buildings and grounds at York can be sold to lessen or liquidate the cost of their construction." (Letter to Portland, Feb. 27, 1796.) He left the country this year, and his successor in the administration, Peter Russell, inherited his views, speaking in his reports to England, of York as "the temporary seat of Government." Finally, Portland, in Sept. 1797, gave him distinctly to understand that the matter was settled, and that "the selection of York has been made on mature reflection."

The trouble was that Simcoe was only Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, while Lord Dorchester was Governor-General of the entire colony, though Simcoe had great difficulty in realizing his subordinate position. He was in the west and thought he knew the requirements of his own province; but Dorchester, who lived in Lower Canada could not see the wisdom of placing the capital of Upper Canada so far away, and preferred to have it in a place more accessible by water from Montreal and Quebec. So he decided on York, and the Home Government very naturally accepted the view of their chief officer in the colony. But Londoners may well bear in grateful recollection the first Governor of our province, who could see no place to equal "Georgina-upon-the-Thames," as he was once inclined to name it, or London, as it has ever since been known.

The name "London" was connected with this locality at an early period in the history of the country. At first it applied only to a town on paper. It was soon definitely attached to a section of the country. In 1788, Lord Dorchester divided Upper Canada into four districts, named from west to east, Hesse, Nassau, Mecklenberg and Lunenburg. A few years later (1792) this intensely German nomenclature was dropped by Governor Simcoe, and they were called Western, Home, Midland and Eastern. Subsequently there was a re-arrangement. Thirty-eight, Geo. III., chap. 5, passed in 1799, divided up the province into nine districts—Western,

London, Gore, Niagara, Home, Midland, Newcastle, Johnston and Eastern. These districts were sub-divided into counties, or "circles," though the latter title appears to have been used only in some official documents. Sec. 36 of the act gives the county of Middlesex as made up of the townships of London, Westminster, Dorchester, Yarmouth, Southwold, Dunwich, Aldboro and Delaware. In 1821, Lobo, Mosa, Ekfrid and Caradoc were added to Middlesex, and McGillivray and Biddulph in 1865. But the southern townships had been formed into the county of Elgin in 1852.

Townships at first were numbered, but names soon took the place of numbers, and the one laid out at the forks of the Thames and north of its south branch was called London. By the act, 33, Geo. III, chap. 2, provision had been made for the election of officers. A high constable was first appointed by the Court of Quarter Sessions. It was made the duty of the constable to summon the householders and ratepayers to meet at a convenient place and elect a clerk, assessors, collector of taxes, overseers of roads and poundkeeper. Two wardens were to be appointed, one by the people and one by the clergy. The treasurer was appointed by the Court of Quarter Sessions. The control of municipalities was at this time largely in the hands of the Legislature, and it was not until 1841 that they were allowed any extended measure of home rule.

But the site of the Governor's capital was not handed over to settlement. All around it farms were being located and land occupied, but between the forks remained as it appeared to the first white visitor. What it looked like we may learn from George Heriot, Dep. Postmaster-General of B. N. A., who saw it about 1807. and wrote of it in his "Travels Through Canada." Coming eastward from Detroit, up the valley of the Thames, he describes the scenery. After passing the proposed site of Chatham and the Moravian settlement, he goes on to say: "In proceeding upward, the sinuosities of the river are frequent, and the summits of the banks rather elevated, but not broken. On either side are villages of the Delawares and Chippewas. Somewhat higher up at the confluence of the two forks of the river, is the site of which Governor Simcoe made choice for a town to be named London. Its position with relation to Lakes Huron, Erie and Ontario is central; and around it is a fertile and inviting tract of country. It communicates with Lake Huron by a northern or main branch of the same river and a small portage or carrying place. Along the banks of the Thames are now several rich settlements, and new establishments are every week added to this as well as to other parts of the neighboring country by the immigration of wealthy farmers from United States. On the east side of the forks, between the two main branches, on a regular eminence, about forty feet above the

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water, there is a natural plain, denuded of wood except where small groves are interspersed, affording in its present state the appearance of a beautiful park, on whose formation and culture taste and expense have been bestowed."

The war of 1812-15, though it moved over the western peninsula, found London still the natural park that Heriot described, and left it unstained by blood of friend or foe. A sharp skirmish occurred a few miles west. Lt.-Gov. Sir Gordon Drummond had established a military post at Delaware, and from it a sortie of 240 men, under Lieut. Bladen, was made against a U. S. post at Longwoods, on March 3, 1814. Our troops did not succeed in capturing the post attacked, but the U. S. commandant evidently found the neighborhood too warm for comfort, and retreated to Detroit. The Delaware post was strengthened during the summer by the addition of some light infantry and a party of dragoons, but there was no more fighting.

At the close of the war the surrounding townships began to fill up more rapidly with settlers. What is now Middlesex had been generally surveyed and lands granted. The earliest settlers in Middlesex and Elgin were doubtless those who came through the instrumentality of Col. Talbot. Here are a few of the names:—Daniel Springer, R. B. Bringham, Timonhy Kilbourn, Joseph O'Dell, Andrew Banghart, Seth Putnam, Mahlon Burwell, Jas. Nevills, Jacobus Schenck, Leslie Patterson, Sylvanus Reynolds, Wm. Orr, Henry Cook, Samuel Hunt, Richard Williams, Peter Teeple, John Aikens, Maurice Sovereign, Henry Daniels, Jas. Smiley, Abraham Hoover.

Westminster had been surveyed by Watson in 1809-10, and we find the Odells there in 1810, Norton in 1810, and Griffith and Patrick in 1812. Geo. Ward purchased land from the Indians in 1810. His name is familiar to us in connection with Wardsville. About the same time A. McMillan settled in Byron. Nissouri was surveyed in 1818, and its settlement began with the McGuffins, Vinings, Hardys, and Scatterheds.

Prior to 1818 London township had very few families, but in that year a large addition was made. Richard Talbot, an Irish gentleman, received a large grant from the Imperial Government, a condition being that he should bring out at least sixty adults. To ensure the stability of the new settlement, each man was required to advance £50, which was to be returned to him as soon as he had built a log house. On the way out some dropped from the ranks at Kingston, but about forty families came to London. Among them were:—Richard Talbot, John and Edward Talbot, Wm. Gerrie, Thos. Brooks, Peter Rogers, Thos. Guest, Frank Lewis, Benjamin Lewis, Wm. Haskett, Wm. Mooney, Wm. Evans, Wm. O'Neil, Edmund Stoney, Jos. O'Brien, Geo. Foster, Thos. and

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Jas. Howay, John Phalen, Jos. Hardy, John Grey, Robt. Keays, Robt. Ralph, John Sifton, Thos. Howard.

Probably the nearest settler to the site of London was John Applegarth, who about 1816 commenced cultivating hemp, an industry which was at that time encouraged by money grants from the English Government. He located on a ridge east of Mount Pleasant Cemetery, and built a log cabin. He was not very successful, however, and shortly after moved south to the neighborhood now occupied by Mr. A. C. Johnstone, and his deserted cabin fell into the occupation of some squatters. There was no bridge over the river at this time, but a canoe ferry a short distance below the forks served the purpose of communication.

During this period the official centre of the London district was off to one side at Vittoria, about six miles south of the present town of Simcoe, and fifty miles in a straight line from the Forks. A court house had been erected in that village, and the district school was also located there. It had been started at Charlotteville in 1807. John Mitchell, who had come from Scotland to act as tutor for Col. Hamilton's children, secured two lots and in a small building opened the school. It was removed to Vittoria shortly after. Mitchell was made a judge in 1819, and remained on the bench until 1844.

Great inconvenience was experienced by the residents of the district in their enforced attendance at Vittoria. They had now reached a very respectable number. Gourlays statistics, in 1817, places them at 8,907, while Fothergill's record in 1825 showed an increase to 12,351. The roads were not of the best. By an act passed in 1793 every settler was required to clear a road across his own lot, but as crown lands and clergy reserves came between lots, the road often began on one side of a man's farm and ended on the other. Of course there was the Government road running westward from York which had been originated by Gov. Simcoe. Col. Talbot was also engaged in constructing Talbot street through his own settlement. But the facilities for travel were primitive at the best. And when the court house in Vittoria was burned in 1825, the people of Middlesex made a vigorous effort to remove the headquarters of the district to a more convenient locality. Especially persistent in their labours to this end were Chas. Ingersoll and Peter Teeple, of Oxford; M. Homer, of Blenheim; Dan Springer, of Delaware, and Ira Schofield, of London township—leading merchants and magistrates of this section. They were determined, if possible, to have the seat of government transferred from Vittoria to London; and though they met with considerable opposition, especially from the southern townships, they were finally successful.

On the 30th January, 1826, an act was passed by the Provincial Parliament (7 Geo. IV., chap. XIII.) 'to establish the district town

of London in a more central position." After reciting the burning of the court house in Vittoria, and noting the inconvenient location of that place for the business of the district, it declares that "It is expedient to establish the district town at the reservation heretofore made for a town near the forks of the River Thames, in the townships of London and Westminster," and orders that "the Court of Quarter Sessions for the Peace, and the district courts in and for said district, shall be holden and assembled within some part of the reservations . . . so soon as a jail and court house shall be erected thereon," and in the meantime at such a place as the sheriff may appoint.

The original reservation made by Simcoe appears to have extended to the 3rd con., London, north of London West, and south to the present southern limit of the city in Westminster, all the lots in this space having been laid out in park lots. The grants to settlers in the vicinity however, incroached somewhat on the limits of the reservation.

Another act passed at the same session (Chap. XIV.) makes provision for the survey of the town and the building of the court house. The first section provides that "a town shall be laid out and surveyed under the direction of the Surveyor-General within the reservation heretofore made for a town, near the Forks of the Thames, in the townships of London and Westminster, in the county of Middlesex, in the said district of London, and a plan thereof shall be furnished by the said Surveyor-General to the Commissioners hereinafter named ; and in the said plan or survey a tract or space of not less than four acres shall be designated as reserved for the purpose of a court house and gaol."

Section 2 appoints Hon. Thos. Talbot, Mahlon Burwell, James Hamilton, Charles Ingersoll, and John Matthews, of Lobo, as commissioners for erecting the court house and jail.

Section 3 authorizes the justices of the peace to levy by assessment on every inhabitant householder in the district an additional rate of one-third of a penny in the pound to defray the cost of building.

Section 4 gives the commission power in the meantime to borrow not more than £4,000, at interest not exceeding 6 per cent.

Section 5 requires the commissioners to meet at St. Thomas on the first Monday in March, 1826, and organize by the election of a president and secretary.

The first step taken under the acts above cited was the appointment of Mr. Mahlon Burwell to make the survey of the proposed town. The plan in the Crown Lands Department, Toronto, a copy of which I have here, shows that it contained about 240 acres. The river formed the southern and western boundaries of the town ; to the east it extended as far as Wellington street ; on the north it

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was bounded by North street, or Queen's avenue, as it is now called. North street, however, did not run in a straight line. A short distance west of Richmond the line of survey turned southwest, striking what is now Carling street, about where the police court stands, and running from thence direct to the river. This was owing to the fact that the land to the north-west of this jog was part of the Kent farm, which extended westward over the river. The land along the river bank was not surveyed into lots, but was left as a strip of meadow surrounding the town plot on two sides, and varying from one to six chains in width. It is evident from an inspection of the map that there were a number of small streams in the locality, all signs of which have long disappeared. The most important commenced on York street, probably beyond the town boundary, and running south and west emptied into the river near the foot of Bathurst street. It was subsequently converted into a covered drain which the older property holders of that section can well remember.

In selecting names for the streets, the surveyor chose some well known to the people of the colony at that time. North and South streets apparently marked the boundaries of the town in those two directions; while Thames street was but a proper compliment to the river that ran near by. Loyalty was satisfied by naming one street King, and giving two others to members of the royal family—the Dukes of York and Clarence. Dundas, Bathurst, Horton and Grey were so called after British Ministers whose departmental duties had brought them into frequent contact with Canadian affairs. The Duke of Wellington was complimented by having one street named for him; and another (Hill) for his mother. Simcoe street kept in memory the name of the first Lieut.-Gov. of Upper Canada; while the name of a popular Governor-General, the Duke of Richmond, whose sad death from hydrophobia in 1819 created a melancholy interest throughout the country, was given to what is now one of our leading thoroughfares. Two streets were named after local celebrities—Col. Talbot, the uncrowned king of the county; and Thomas Ridout, Surveyor-General of Upper Canada, or possibly his son, equally well known in London.

The first man to move into the new town was a Scotch tailor, Peter McGregor, who came in from the neighborhood of Byron and took up a lot (21, S. King) on which he erected a little shanty to serve the purpose of a hotel. He wanted to be on hand to provide for the comforts of the London pioneers; though the first provision seems to have been little more than a jug of whisky on the stump of a tree at the front door. His wife, formerly a Miss Pool, of Westminster, was an energetic, bustling woman; and developed the hotel business as rapidly as she could—though for some time the accommodation was limited, and when there was an influx of

visitors at the first courts holden in the town, most of them, we are told, had to go some three miles to Flannigan's to find shelter. This first house built in London was situated on the south side of King street a short distance west of Ridout.

McGregor did not obtain a patent from the Crown for some years—the record in the registry office giving the date as July 25, 1831. It was the lot on which now stands the Grand Central Hotel. The first lot patented was by J. G. Goodhue, the pioneer merchant, who received his deed for lot 20, N. Dundas street (being half an acre on the corner of Dundas and Ridout streets) on September 11, 1830. He had, however, commenced business before that date, in fact he seems to have opened his store in 1826—the same year in which McGregor arrived. Other lots were rapidly taken up and a number of settlers made the new town their home.

The commission appointed to attend to the erection of the Court House met in St. Thomas in March 1826, and commenced their work as speedily as possible. The plan of the building is said to have been an imitation of one of the baronial homes of Great Britain, and was adopted more as a compliment to Col. Talbot than with any view to public convenience. At first, a temporary building was constructed on the north-west corner of Dundas and Ridout streets, and in this the first court of Quarter Sessions was held January 9, 1827, Col. Ryerse being chairman of the bench of magistrates. It was scarcely completed before it was required. Thomas Pomeroy, a sheriff's officer was murdered, and his murderer tried, found guilty, and hung in three days after sentence was pronounced. It was not convenient to keep a prisoner any length of time in these primitive jails.

In the Gore Gazette, of July 31, 1827, a paper published by Geo. Gurnett, Ancaster, appears a letter from a traveller who had visited London during the holding of a court, and who tells a very amusing story of a trial for assault made by a little Irish pensioner on a big Yankee from Delaware, who had offended the loyalty of the Irishman by some insulting remarks, and received a blow on the mouth which knocked out some of his teeth. The fiery pensioner was defended by Mr. Tenbrock in an eloquent speech, and being found guilty was sentenced to a fine of one shilling. The writer says:

"I was much pleased with the delightful situation of the town, commanding as it does a most extensive view of the richest, most fertile and most thickly settled part of the province, as well as a delightful prospect of both branches of the picturesque River Thames. The new court house, which is to be a fine building in the Gothic style, 100 feet long, 50 feet wide and 50 feet high, having an octagon tower, fourteen feet in diameter at each of its angles, is now building by Mr. Edward, an architect of first rate ability. The

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house in which the law courts are now held is a building erected by subscription, and eventually intended for the district school-house."

The new court house was built by Mr. John Ewart, of Toronto. Thomas Park, father of the late Police Magistrate, was his foreman, or partner, and had charge of the work. He became a citizen of the new town. One of the employees was Robert Carfrae, whose widow died on Carfrae street a few months ago. The brick for the building, as I am informed by Hon. Freeman Talbot, was manufactured by a Toronto man, Wm. Hale, who also became a resident of London. There were two brickyards—one at the rear of the present Robinson Hall, and the other in London West on land subsequently belonging to Walter Nixon.

As soon as the court house was completed the temporary building was converted into a schoolhouse, according to the original intention, and Peter Van Every, jr., who had been acting as jailer, became the first schoolmaster. The early teachers in Upper Canada, it is said, were largely recruited from the ranks of retired soldiers and were mostly Irish. I am not sure whether Van Every was an Irishman or not; his name is not good Irish at all events.

The construction of the court house definitely marked the founding of London; though at first it was not a distinct municipality, and its officials exercised their authority over a larger tract of country than the few acres of which the town was composed. Of the first settlers some like Park, and Carfrae, and Hale, came in connection with the building of the court house. Some, like John Tenbrock, a lawyer, who came from Long Point, to practice in the courts. Others came to London as a suitable place from which to supply the wants of the people of the surrounding country, at that time the most important element in the population of this section.

Peter McGregor's little pioneer hotel soon took second place, for in 1828 Abraham Carrol built the Mansion House on the North side of Dundas street, east of Ridout, a more pretentious establishment, and one which provided ample accommodation for the travelling public for many years. Mr. Goodhue's store was the general emporium which supplied the material needs of the community as well as any of our modern departmental stores. Rev. E. J. Boswell came as a Church of England clergyman in 1829, though Rev. Mr. McIntosh, of Kettle Creek, held occasional service before that date. Mr. Tenbrock was the pioneer lawyer, and Dr. R. Chisholm the first physician.

The first officials, as near as I can find were the following:—Sheriff, Daniel Rappalge; Judge, Jas. Mitchell; Clerk of the Peace, John B. Askin; Deputy Clerk, Wm. King Cornish; Gideon Constable, John O'Neill; Jailer, Samuel Park; Court Crier, Gideon Bostwick; Registrar, Mahlon Burwell; Treasurer, John Harris.

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For the first few years London did not seem to grow very rapidly, though all circumstances were radiant with hope for its future. Andrew Picken's book, "The Canadas," published in England in 1832, has this to say of it, as it appeared in 1829:

"London is yet but inconsiderable; but from its position in the heart of a fertile country is likely to become of some importance hereafter, when the extreme wild becomes more settled. The town is quite new, not containing above forty or fifty houses—all of bright boards and shingles. The streets and gardens are full of black stumps, etc. They were building a church and had finished a handsome Gothic court house."

But my subject requires me to go no further than the surveying of the town and the building of the court house, which definitely marks the founding of London. Seventy-six years have passed since then, and in that space of time it has grown in area from 240 acres to 4,478. The population represented by Peter McGregor and his wife has increased to about 40,000,* and the assessed value has advanced from the nominal sum for which 240 acres could have been purchased in Western Ontario in 1825, to over eighteen and a half millions of dollars. I have but given the introductory chapter; I leave it for others to record the history of the past seventy-six years of London's prosperous growth, from a town on paper to a beautiful and prosperous city.



* NOTE—In 1908 the population exceeds 50,000
assessment \$25,500,000

The Pioneers of Middlesex

AN ADDRESS BY SENATOR SIR JOHN
CARLING, K.C.M.G., NOVEMBER 17TH, 1902

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I am very glad indeed to be present to-night, and to thank you for the honour you have done me in electing me as your Honorary President.

I can assure you that it will give me great pleasure indeed to do anything I possibly can to further the objects you have in view, in giving the history of this part of Canada in which I have lived so long, and happen to know a great deal about, and shall only be so glad on any occasion to assist in gathering information that will be useful to the Society.

I may say, ladies and gentlemen, that as one who was born in the township of London, about eight or ten miles north of here, now nearly seventy-four years ago, I remember very well the hardships that the people of that day had to put up with. I remember hearing my father giving the history of his life in Canada. Starting from Hull in England in 1818, he came to Montreal. He came in a vessel or sail-boat to Montreal, and then came up the river on what they called a Durham boat; and they had to push these boats all the way from Montreal to Kingston. They had no vessels on the St. Lawrence at that time, because they could not go over the rapids.

My father then walked from Kingston to Cobourg; remained in Cobourg all winter, and then walked from Cobourg to Toronto in the spring of 1819. Toronto was then called Little York or Muddy York. He took a vessel from Toronto across to Niagara—a schooner was then crossing the lake. He then walked from Niagara Falls to Colonel Talbot's in the county of Elgin, eight or ten miles west of St. Thomas. There was no other way of getting along at that time except walking. He went to Colonel Talbot's and drew one hundred acres of land, about eight miles north of this city; and the condition of the grant was that he should clear so many acres, and erect a house on the land. When you had done this you were entitled to your patent, or your deed, for which you had to pay eight pounds sterling.

The Government of the day never forced the payment of the land, so long as a settler complied with the conditions of building and clearing, and some did not pay for the land for twenty, forty or

fifty years afterwards. The Government was only too glad to have settlers come and live in the country, and improve it. One would hardly believe the hardships they had to put up with, and the work they had to do to clear their land, and to try to improve the country and bring it to the condition in which it is now.

I mention my father's name because he was only one of hundreds of others. I remember so well what he said of the trials he had to put up with, and I am going to take the liberty of giving you some description of those hardships.

My father settled on the eighth concession of the township of London. He got his piece of land and he commenced to clear it; and the first thing to do was to put up a small log cabin, and cut down trees, and get the neighbors to help. The settlers were all very kind to each other, and if any house was to be built, or some house raised, they would come and join in and help the new arrivals. My father cleared a piece of land, cutting down the large trees; and built a small shanty of logs. They split wood to make shingles, (they called them clap boards in those days), and they put on the roof of the building with these clap boards. Often in the winter time, I have heard my father say, the roof was so open that in the morning his quilt and his face would be covered with snow.

The next thing a settler had to do was to try and get a wife. Of course, you know a man living in the bush like that would find it a very dreary life and so he would try and get a woman or a young lady to come and join him in the hardships he had to endure. At that time it was not very easy to get a wife, so I have been told, and when you had secured the good wishes of the lady, you had difficulty in getting the marriage ceremony performed. There were no clergymen in those days in that district. They did not come to this part of the country for years afterwards, and if you were about to be married you had to see a magistrate. A Magistrate was the only one who had authority to marry; and there were very few of them in those days. There was one in our section by the name of Schofield, and in order to succeed in getting him to marry a young couple, it was necessary to put up notices in three different places,—one on a mill door, another on a distillery door, and another was to be put up on a large tree on the cross roads; so that anyone going along should know that a certain couple were to be married, and if they had any objections they were to come forward to this Magistrate and declare them. If you would not mind I should like to read to you a copy of one of the notices that was put up at that time. Here is a copy of the notice that was issued in 1821. I may say, no dissenting Minister could legally unite in the bonds of wedlock parties intending to become man and wife; and if there was no Episcopal clergyman living within fifteen miles a Justice of the Peace had to officiate. The publication, however,

was requisite before any other step could be taken. The intending groom then went before His Worship and demanded the important document, which ran thus :

"I, Ira Schofield, Justice of the Peace, legally qualified, do hereby notify the public that I intend, on the 6th day of May, to unite in marriage Mr. A. D., of London township, to Miss C. D., of Lobo, you and each of you, who read this document, are hereby required to come before me at my office, situated on Lot No. 4, in the 5th con. of London, on or before the first day of May next, and give me some legal reasons, if any there be, why the aforesaid parties can not be united in the holy bonds of wedlock. Otherwise forever hold your peace."—Ira Schofield.

Now, as I have said, the law required this document to be posted in three different places,—a mill door, a distillery house door, and a large tree at the cross roads. I might say these publications were frequently posted with the blank side out. Now I can only tell you that my father had to put up the notice like this on the mill-house door, the distillery door, and a large tree. I was not aware of this until a few years ago. I was out at the 4th con., near where Mr. Perrin lives, and my father pointed out to me where the tree was that he put the notice on in 1821. The tree was not there at that time.

There was a small store kept by a man by the name of Jetty, just across the creek opposite Mr. Perrin's. Emigrants coming in had no roads to follow; they followed blazed paths. Surveyors were busy making surveys and making paths so that people could see their lands; and they followed blazed trees for that purpose. They followed the winding of the river, and they would follow these paths until they came to the part of the township where their land was situated. This man Jetty kept the store; and my father pointed out to me, that was the point where he put the notice on the tree.

At that time it was very difficult to get from one place to another. I have seen young men getting married who had to go a long way to see the clergyman. There were few horses in those days, and they had to come with oxen in a cart or sleigh; and I have known them to go on horse-back. There were no side saddles, or saddles of any kind, for that matter; but they would get a pad or sheep-skin, and strap it around the horse, and the young man would get on, and the young lady would sit behind, and hold on to the belt around the young man's body. And they would go five or ten miles in that way to get married. And I have seen people going into London to market in the same way. I have seen a man and his wife going in on horse-back, the lady sitting behind the gentleman and carrying their basket of butter and eggs to market. They had no carriages; and they had no waggons; and very few horses; and

so that was about the only way they could get to market. These are some of the ways the people had to get on in those days.

The clearing of the land was the most difficult thing. They had to go right into the bush, to chop the trees into logs, and then make a pile of logs and brush and burn it. Sometimes they would have logging bees, and get ten or twenty neighbors to come with their oxen and logging chains; and they would roll up these logs into large heaps, perhaps twenty or thirty logs one after another, and let them stand for a few days, and then set fire to them and burn up the brush and the logs. Subsequently, they would gather the ashes; they would get a large hollow tree, and cut it five or six feet high, and fill it with ashes, and then put it in water and boil it down to make potash or black salts. That potash was about the only thing they could get money for in those days.

The Honorable Mr. Goodhue, who was one of the early settlers, had a small store out on Brick street, the only store there was in this section of the country. He was an American, a very intelligent man, and he bought up potash or black salts and shipped them from Port Stanley to the United States.

When I was a young lad, we had nothing like tea. The tea that we used, (and I would like it better now than a great deal of the tea we get,) was spearmint and peppermint. We would gather it in the fall of the year and put it in the loft to dry. We made our sugar from the maple tree, boiling the sap to make sugar; and then we would have plenty of good milk; and with the peppermint and maple sugar and milk we made very good tea, which we all enjoyed very much.

I might talk to you for two hours telling you of the hardships the settlers had to put up with. After you got your home up if you wanted something to live on there was plenty of game in the woods. There were deer, and wild turkey and partridges; and the streams were full of fish; so that if a man had a gun, (and nearly every settler had one,) he could go out almost any day and shoot a deer; and if they wanted a wild turkey they could shoot them by going some distance for them; while they could get plenty of fish from the streams.

There were hardly any mills at that time. One of the first mills was where the Water Works are now located. There was a spring that supplied the mill with water; and the farmers would go there with their corn to be ground. Mr. Schofield had a distillery opposite; and the farmers would come and wait there for days sometimes before they could get their corn ground. The force was not very great, and they had to do the best they could. They would have lively times while they were waiting—talking over matters and enjoying themselves very much. After the corn was ground, they would sometimes carry it on their backs. Occasionally

they would have a yoke of oxen, and throw the bags on the yoke ; and carry them that way through the bush. If the mill was not running something else had to be adopted ; and I have known my father to get a large stump and scrape it out like a mortar, and then get a pole and put in Indian corn in the stump and then keep pounding it with the pole until it was all broken up. When this was boiled up with milk, it made a food that was enjoyed very much.

We had no tailors or shoemakers or mechanics of any kind. The first mechanic that was known in this part of the country was a tailor by the name of Hessock. He lived in London East in later days. He was a good tailor. A man who could get a coat made by a tailor, or a pair of boots made by a shoemaker, was looked upon as a dandy—which he was when compared to the men who would have their feet wound around with bark and deer skins. Until I was ten years old I never wore a shoe on my foot or a coat on my back or a cap on my head, that was not made by my father or my mother. My father knew nothing about shoe-making, he was brought up on the farm in the old country ; but necessity compelled him to turn his attention to making of shoes for the three or four young boys that were growing up. He would make his own lasts ; and then he would kill a young animal, and take the skin to the tannery, which was down about Delaware or Kilworth. The tanner would keep half the hides for his pay. In this way my father used to make all our shoes. They were not such fine shoes as you get now-a-days ; but they answered the purpose in those rough and ready times. My mother would card the wool, and spin the wheel, and knit ; and she knitted all our socks. There was a weaver had a loom a few miles away ; and he would weave the yarn ; and they would use the bark off the butternut tree to dye the wool. We were glad to have home made clothes dyed with butternut bark ; and we felt quite at home in them ; for we knew of nothing any better than what we were getting.

London was called The Forks ; and went by that name for a long time, even after it became a village. I have heard my father say he hauled the first load of hay into London to Mr. McGregor's, who built a small house on a lot just south of the Court House, where the Grand Central hotel is now located. The house was only pulled down some twenty years ago ; and I was very sorry when I knew it had to be pulled down. London at that time only had that one house. A Magistrate was soon after appointed and one of the first cases before him was that of a man who stole an axe. This was considered a serious offence ; because at that time an axe was a very useful thing and very hard to be got. A number of the people were got together as a jury, and they passed a sentence upon him, that he was to be chained to a stump for twenty-four hours,

which was done, so he remained all night chained to a stump for having stolen an axe. There was no Court House here at that time. London got a fair start when the Court House for this whole district was built here. The Court House used to be in the county of Norfolk. It was burnt down; and then the question came up as to where the new Court House should be built. It was finally decided that it should be built at the Forks of the River. And they built a very good Court House, considering it was seventy years ago; the building stands there now with some improvements. It was the first Court House built in Western Ontario.

The late Colonel Talbot was one of the Commissioners; and the building was after the style of one of the castles in the part of Ireland where he came from. The expenditure of that large amount of money and the giving of employment to so many men to build the Court House, which was commenced in 1827, gave London a good start. All the trials, and all the courts that were held in the whole of this district, from west of Hamilton, down to Lakes Erie and Huron, were tried in that Court House. It was the only Court House that was in existence at that time.

The next thing that gave London a start was making London Military Head Quarters for Western Canada; that took place in 1838. The first Regiment that was stationed in London came here in 1837. The 32nd Regiment came here first, and during the time it was stationed here, the Colonel of the Regiment, a man who was respected very much by everybody, died; and the funeral of that gentleman will never be forgotten by those who were living here at that time. He was buried with military honors; the artillery were out, and volleys were fired at the grave. This was something new to the people in Western Canada. The barracks which were built here cost something like \$250,000.00; and the expenditure of that large sum of money, and the stationing here of a regiment of regulars and battery of artillery you can readily understand gave London quite a lively appearance. They spent a large sum of money in supplying the troops; and that made times very good, and encouraged shop-keepers and the people very much, having so much money expended in their midst.

We had no post office here. In olden times there would be a gathering of fifteen or twenty families who came from Ireland, England or Scotland; and if a letter happened to come out from their old home it would be mentioned all around the neighborhood; and they would be all called in; and they would have a jolly good night reading that letter. We had no stage coaches and no regular mail; and a letter coming from the Old Land made very interesting reading matter for the people.

I remember the first council established here in 1841, when London was created a Police Village. They had a council of five,

THE PIONEERS OF MIDDLESEX

and the Honorable George Jarvis Goodhue was chairman of that council. It was held in the small plastered building which you find now on the corner of Fullarton and Talbot streets. The late Dr. Cornish, the father of Mr. F. E. Cornish, who was Mayor of this city for some years, was the city clerk; and Mr. Goodhue was the President. I remember I was going along past this place with my father when they were holding a session. It was a warm summer day, and one of the windows was up, and we heard quite a noise inside. We didn't know what was the matter; it appeared as if there was a row of some kind; and Mr. Goodhue came out of the door hastily and he said, "Mr. Carling, I swear you a special constable, we have got trouble." So my father had to go in, and when they went to the front door to arrest the disturber of the peace he jumped out of the window and cleared off into the town. My father was not constable enough to arrest him at that time.

What have we now in Canada? We have our educational system; and we have five hundred thousand children between the ages of five and fifteen years marching to their schools every day. We have thousands of schools and teachers. We have our telegraph, and telephone; and we have our railways; and our steamers ploughing the waters, going through the St. Lawrence river up to Duluth and Fort William. We have railways crossing the Continent. We have one line running from Halifax to Vancouver; and we expect to have in a very short time a line of steamers which will carry you across the ocean in four or five days.

I have heard my mother say they were on the ocean four or five weeks going to Boston; and I have heard her tell of so much sickness aboard, and the storms, and the rocking of the vessel, that I never had the pluck to go across the ocean.

We have just had the Heir to the Throne of Great Britain, the Duke and Duchess of York, crossing the continent in a magnificent train of cars. We have a magnificent line of steamers; no finer and no better in the world, than the line going to Japan and China. And we have other steamers going from Vancouver to Australia. We are connected with that great Empire that has vessels in all ports of the world. And I think we ought to feel proud that we belong to such an Empire, that has her warships standing guard all over the world to protect her citizens, and help them that cannot themselves. I think we ought to feel proud of our Empire. And nothing has made our people feel more proud and more loyal to the Empire than the grand way in which our sons went forth to Africa, some 13,000 miles, to fight the battles of the Empire, and for the love of our Country and our Queen.

Ladies and gentlemen I thank you for the kindly manner in which you have listened to my address, and I can say that anything that I can do to advance the interest in this organization you can rely that I am on hand to do it.



